

# BLACK Lesbians in the 70s and Before

## An At Home Tour at the Lesbian Herstory Archives

### III. Timeline

THREE : LITERATURE \* FICTION / POETRY / CRITICISM

V. Donor Forms

LESBIAN

HERSTORY

ARCHIVES

1971

1977

~ Keepin' ON ~

Black Lesbians Archiving

curated by:  
SHAUNTA SMITH

The Date is:

April 24<sup>th</sup>  
2010

at the  
Lesbian Herstory Archives

New York

IV. Jan

There have been Black lesbians throughout history, both in Africa and America. Though totally unrecognized, Black lesbians have made and continue to make significant contributions to our culture.

—Bessie Smith Memorial Production Collective  
"Varied Voices of Black Women" Concert Program

For you—I see myself  
and reflect my very image  
and that of my sister's  
and my grandmother's before...  
I see the history of our race—  
—Sodina Black  
"To Ann"

IN AMERIKA

They call us DYKES:

\* Lesbian lives in the 70's \*

1980 and beyond... 10



# The Lesbian Herstory Archives

All are accessible to visitors.

## Archives of the Archives

And, last but not least, we have the papers of the Lesbian Herstory Archives. These files include all of our correspondence, articles written about

**Statement of Purpose:** The Lesbian Herstory Archives exists to gather and preserve records of Lesbian lives and activities so that future generations will have ready access to materials relevant to their lives. The process of gathering this material will uncover and collect our herstory denied to us previously by patriarchal historians in the interests of the culture which they serve. We will be able to analyze and reevaluate the Lesbian experience; we also hope the existence of the Archives will encourage Lesbians to record their experiences in order to formulate our living herstory.

We will collect and preserve any materials that are relevant to the lives and experiences of Lesbians: books, magazine, journals, news clippings (from establishment, Feminist or lesbian media), bibliographies, photos, historical information, tapes, films, diaries, oral histories, poetry and prose, biographies, autobiographies, notices of events, posters, graphics and other memorabilia.

**Principles:** Many of the Archives' principles are a radical departure from conventional archival practices. They are inclusive and non-institutional and reveal the Archives' commitment to living history, to housing the past along with the present. Among the basic principles guiding the Archives are:

- All Lesbian women must have access to the Archives; no academic, political, or sexual credentials will be required for use of the collection; race and class must be no barrier for use or inclusion.
- The Archives shall be housed within the community, not on an academic campus that is by definition closed to many women.
- The Archives shall be involved in the political struggles of all Lesbians.
- Archival skills shall be taught, one generation of Lesbians to another, breaking the elitism of traditional archives.
- The community should share in the work of the Archives.
- Funding shall be sought from within the communities the Archives serves, rather than from outside sources.
- The community should share in the work of the Archives.
- The Archives will always have a caretaker living in it so that it will always be someone's home rather than an institution.
- The Archives will never be sold nor will its contents be divided.



\* WELCOME To your ZINE \*

Made especially for you!

\* BLACK Lesbians (AND FRIENDS)

## Contents: ←

- I. The Collection
- II. Black Lesbian Herstory in the Collection
- III. Timeline  
...1969 and before - 1980 and beyond...
- IV. What Next?
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- VII. The Players
- VIII. The Archives & CLAGS & Thank yousss.



# THE COLLECTION

rainbow flags and Frisbees

book and monographs

stickers

board games like Lesbian Trivia

and date books

an assortment of hats

periodical collection

biographical files



FENCING EQUIPMENT

buttons

sculptures

special collections

pasties donated by a lesbian stripper

organizational files

roller skates

Lesbiana

collages

subject files

audio-visual collection

CALENDARS

military uniforms

geographic files

a feather boa

banners from marches

to the  
collection  
2. 1994

LHEF.ORG

I. The Collection



## Individuals

Edmonia Lewis (sculptor) 1843-1909  
 Angelina Weld Grimké (educator, poet) 1880-1958  
 Bessie Smith (singer) 1894-1937  
 Gladys Bentley (performer) 1920s  
 "Moms Mabley" Loretta Mary Aiken (performer) 1894-1975  
 Mabel Hampton (singer, domestic worker, activist) 1902-1989  
 Lillian Foster (garment worker) 1904-1979  
 Josephine Baker 1906-1975  
 Lorraine Hansberry (playwright) 1930-1965  
 Annie Lee Grant, aka Jim Grant (passing woman)  
 Hazel Crawford, d. (poet)  
 Cheryl Clarke (poet)  
 Audre Lorde (poet)  
 Deirdre McCalla (musician)  
 Pamela Robinson (student)  
 Jewelle Gomez (poet)  
 Wilmette Brown (poet, organizer)  
 Barbara Smith (writer)  
 Gwendolyn Rodgers (organizer)  
 Linda Brown (poet)  
 Cara Vanga (graphic designer)  
 Robin Christian (poet)  
 Jaye Austin-Williams (writer)  
 Dorothy Randall Gray (poet, performer)  
 Karen Hamilton (performer)  
 Linda Tillery (musician)  
 E. Kitch Childs (psychologist)  
 Cheryl Boyce-Taylor (writer)  
 Edwina Tyler (drummer)  
 Jasmine (artist)  
 Hilary Kay (musician)  
 Gwen Avery (musician)  
 Lynette Johnson (poet)  
 Jacquie Bishop (poet, producer)  
 Ayofemi Stowe (writer)  
 Anita Cornwall (writer)  
 Lorraine Currelley (performer)  
 Combhee River Collective  
 Andrea Cennan (writer)  
 Michelle Parkerson (film maker)  
 Gwendolyn Hardwick (performer)  
 Luvenia Pinson (organizer)  
 Maua Flowers (organizer)  
 Pat Parker (poet) 1944-1989  
 Sabrina Sojourner (writer)  
 Midgett (writer)  
 Mary Watkins (musician)  
 Live Oak Woman (witch)  
 Rev. Magora E. Kennedy

## II. Black Lesbian Herstory in the Collection

Joyce Hunter (organizer)  
 Irene Sabasu (poet)  
 Ann Allen Shockley (writer, librarian)  
 Michelle Cliff (poet)  
 Red Arobateau (writer)  
 Pat Suncircle (writer)  
 Gloria Hull (writer, historian)  
 June Jordan (poet, organizer)  
 Terri Jewell (poet)  
 Julie Blackwoman (writer)  
 E. Sharon Gomillion (poet)  
 Jemima Writers Collective (1977)  
 Margaret Sloan (organizer)  
 Georgia Brooks (organizer)  
 Arisa Reed (dancer) 1957-1986  
 Linda Hopkins  
 Linda McKinney (artist)  
 Alexis Du Veaux (writer)  
 Flying Cloud (writer)  
 Renee McCoy (minister)  
 Joan Gibbs (writer, lawyer)  
 Betty Powell (organizer)  
 Stephanie Byrd (poet)  
 Marilyn Isabell (ex-prisoner, organizer)  
 Lea Hopkins (writer, poet)  
 Becky Birtha (writer)  
 Sapphire  
 Storme Webber  
 and hundreds more

Note: This is just a beginning listing. Every part of the archives collection reflects the voices of African-American Lesbian women. Please join us in both adding your voice, your picture, your song, your dream, your story and in continuing to make this listing available to more and more women.

Black Lesbian  
 Carlson Publishing, Inc.  
 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 1992

# THE KAISER INDEX TO BLACK RESOURCES 1948-1986

FROM THE SCHOMBURG CENTER FOR RESEARCH IN BLACK CULTURE OF THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Black Out  
 Habari-Babari  
 Ache  
 Womannews

Publications  
 Brown Sister Magazine (Wellesley College)  
 Third World Women: The Politics of Being Other, Heresies Fall 1979  
 Conditions, Particularly Conditions Five, The Black Woman's Issue, 1979  
 Salsa Soul  
 Third World Woman  
 The Other Black Woman  
 Black Women's Voice  
 Black Women's Log  
 Black Light  
 Black Lesbian

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 2725-2726  
 2726-2727  
 2727-2728  
 2728-2729



free our sisters ... free ourselves 

Fuck Harvard!  
Fuck Yale!  
Get the Panthers  
Out of jail!

2604

1104. 1101

# THE WOMAN WHO LIVED AS A MAN FOR 15 YEARS

Courtroom striptease bares true sex of Mississippi male

INTO THE SMALL, bare office of the mayor of Kosciusko, Mississippi, a policeman walked with a husky prisoner. The mayor, who also acts as city judge in the town of 10,000, asked in a matter-of-fact routine inquiry what the charges were. He was informed the Negro had been driving with improper lights and a pint of whiskey had been found in the car. Then the policeman told Mayor T. V. Rome something that made him sit up suddenly in his straight-back chair:

"When I tried to search him, he protested and told me: 'Take it easy, I'm a woman.'"

The mayor promptly took up the interrogation of the prisoner, who claimed he was not James McHarris as listed on his license but really a woman named Annie Lee Grant.

The mayor slowly chose his words and told the prisoner: "Annie Lee, if you want to prove to me you're a woman you can do it. But you don't have to unless you want to."

While bug-eyed police and the mayor waited in tense silence, the prisoner walked to a closet, discarded shirt, pants and male underwear. The police crowded in closer, strained their necks and jockeyed for position. When Jim walked out almost completely nude, what they saw made their mouths pop open: the man Jim McHarris long known in town as a hard-working laborer as well as a "mighty tough man with the ladies" was no man at all, but a fully-developed, big-breasted woman.

One of the strangest courtroom scenes in American legal history was quickly culminated when Mayor Rome hurriedly fined the defendant \$100 or 30 days in jail. The word of the sensational unmasking of Jim McHarris quickly got around Kosciusko and jarred the quiet small town.

Especially upset were several women who had been girl friends of Jim McHarris, now revealed to be Annie Lee Grant. One woman admitted regularly receiving money from Jim, when "she" was working as a man on a Memphis barge line. Jim called the woman "his wife." Before "his" exposure, Jim had been engaged to marry a high school girl.

To get the incredible story of the girl that was Annie Lee Grant and the woman called Jim, EBONY went to Kosciusko, Miss., interviewed scores of persons and heard Jim's defiant declaration that she intends to remain a "man" in what she believes is a man's world.



Annie Lee Grant, alias Jim McHarris, lights cigarette in typical masculine gesture on front porch of house where she lived as a man in Kosciusko. Says she: "I've posed as a man, off and on, most of my life."

Continued on Next Page

126. Baker, Dorothy. Young Man with a Horn. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1938.

While not explicit, the relationship between Josephine Jordan, rising young Black singer from Harlem and wealthy, upper class Amy North is of interest. An interracial novel set in the prohibition and jazz era of the 1920s.

FICTION

...1969 and before...



# WOMEN'S MONTHLY

THEY SAID IT COULDN'T BE DONE -- WE DID IT!!

NOVEMBER 1969

→ <sup>1969</sup> black & white women?  
black & white women!

Black women and white women can and must work together for their liberation. A women's liberation movement that does not liberate the most oppressed element is not worthy of the name.

Historically, black women in America have been the chief victims of the idea that to be black is to be ugly and evil. In a culture whose female is supposed to embody beautiful and spiritual values, the black women has been represented as coarse in looks and animal-like in her sensuality.

The black civil rights movement of sixties, with its growing militancy and heightened sense of group power has generated a rejection of the self-loathing projected onto black people in America. Black is beautiful. Black

Continued on page 3

## Parents Often Cause Male Tendencies In Child

maladjustment started in childhood. Parents, fathers particularly, often drive girls to the brink of abnormality. Stuck with an unwanted daughter, they force the youngster to play rough and impress upon her mind a love for everything masculine. Later, these same parents are furious when the girl rejects masculine suitors. Without adequate guidance, the girl will become a jealous, possessive man-woman facing the frustration of living in a society which in most instances has not provided an answer to her problem.



Sex hormones helped Gladys Bentley return to womanhood.

This type of jealousy is often reflected in police records. In Detroit, Leatrice Calloway, 21, was sentenced to 10-20 years for the murder of her female "sweetheart" Marion Ware. Miss Ware said she shot Miss Calloway for dating a man. Ohio was shocked by a similar love slaying. Mrs. Evelyn Butler, 25-year-old mother of two children, was sentenced to the electric chair for strangling and drowning Mrs. Evelyn Clark. Testimony indicated that the two women had been lovers. Mrs. Clark

Eleanor Hunter Double Indemnity:  
The Negro Lesbian in the  
"Straight" White world.  
Dec 9, 1969 for a sociology course  
see Unpublished papers file drawer

JET

2/28/54  
Vol 5

## WOMEN WHO PASS FOR MEN



For 30 years, a betty Mississippi woman lived as a man, sternly bossing a 10-acre farm and caring for an attractive, cream-colored "wife" and her daughter by a previous marriage. When the "man" died two years ago, an amazed undertaker discovered that Pete Bell was really a woman.

At the wife's request, the masquerade was hushed and the burial certificate listed no sex. The widow explained that her husband was an unwanted child who adopted mannish poses and attitudes in order to please a father who wanted a male heir. Incredulous citizens in the small town pooch-pooched the report, claiming, "old Pete just couldn't have fooled me."

The deception which characterized Pete Bell's life mirrors the problems of hundreds of women who are trapped in the half-shadow, no-man's land of the man

woman. Despised by society, they travel an uncharted road which often leads to a jail cell.

Very often the masquerade is only uncovered by an accident or a necessary visit to a doctor. After an automobile accident, Cincinnati doctors discovered that "Charlie Harris"—who had posed as a man for 45 years—was a woman. Harris' true sex was revealed to a woman who knew her as her stepfather. Mrs. Ida Belle Redd said Harris (who died recently in Cincinnati at the age of 107) married her mother in 1902.

At the other end of the spectrum are part-time men: women who for various reasons reject feminine roles and, while retaining female trappings, compete with men for jobs—and other women. These "sometime women" feel contempt for girlish pursuits. Some are athletic women; others intellectual or executive types.

One of these is a famous Harlem woman executive, attractive and youngish, who rejected femininity for a manlike existence. She attends stag parties, takes an active part in jokes aimed at "silly, gullible" women. Her constant companion is an attractive secretary who shares her lavish, one-bedroom apartment.

Problems posed by man-like women are so deep that the public has hardly begun to understand them. Doctors and psychiatrists are co-ordinating their work in the light of new psycho-sexual findings. Their research indicates that operations and psychiatric treatment can free many women of maleness caused by an imbalance of female and male hormones.

Other cases may prove more difficult, although extended psychiatric treatment may cure those whose



Leatrice Calloway killed her female sweetheart.

FILED UNIVERSITY LIBRARY



Bantam 1972  
 Maya Angelou writes about growing up in Arkansas, her life as a Black woman in a white world. In chapter 35, Maya reveals girlhood confusions and fears about being lesbian, later proving her normality by engaging in heterosexual and becoming pregnant. Illustrates lesbian myths and attitudes among Blacks.

Jet 39:2 (Oct 15, 1970): 54



'Bridegroom' Penches huge new bride after ceremony.

## Two Females 'Married' In Chicago—To Each Other

Two women, Edna Knowles and Peaches Stevens, were wed in Liz's Mark III Lounge, a gay bar on Chicago's South Side, before a host of friends and well-wishers. Liz Skinner, proprietor of the lounge, said Edna, "bride," and Peaches, "groom," had joked about getting married, but recently decided they would. In fact, wed and held their ceremony at the Mark III. The new Mrs. Stevens told her mother-in-law was, at first, reluctant to sanction the marriage but now given her blessings to the couple. The Illinois attorney general's office explained to Jet that there is no state statute that either bans or sanctions such marriages. Although the duo has a type of "marriage license" in their possession, the state's official marriage license bureau reported it has no record of their license.

## EDUCATION

### Justice Dept. Officials To Visit Black Colleges To 'Rap'

Four predominantly Black colleges and universities will be included in a U. S. Justice Dept. tour of 51 college campuses. Justice Dept. officials, including U. S. Atty. Gen. John N. Mitchell, hope to improve communications between students and federal law enforcement officials by the series of college campus meetings. During October and November Justice Dept. officials will tour campuses in 32 states and the District of Columbia, including Black colleges Texas Southern, Howard, Atlanta (Ga.) universities and Morgan State College.

Mitchell, in a letter to college heads, said, "... The Justice Dept.'s areas of responsibility—such as law enforcement, civil rights and environmental quality—are also subjects of deep interest to many younger Americans. For that reason we are planning a series of visits to representative campuses in which top officials of the department can meet informally with interested students..."

### Mixed Marriages Soar

The state of Maryland ended its 306-year-old anti-miscegenation law, and within 18 months following its abolition interracial marriages totaled 612. During that same time span, Sidney M. Norton, director of the Health Department's Bureau of Vital Records, said one out of every 106 marriages in the state was interracial.

### Howard Hires Senior As Writer-In-Residence



A fast-rising novelist-playwright, Clay Goss, a Howard University senior, was hired as writer-in-residence and instructor of playwriting at his school in Washington, D. C. Goss, 24, is author of *Bill Pickett, Black Balling*, a novel for young readers soon to be released to school systems across the nation, published by Hill and Wang and distributed by Random House. Last February, the Howard University Cultural Committee produced and financed the major production of the Goss creation, *Homeroom*. Four of his plays were produced at Cardozo High School in the Community Theatre Workshop in Washington, D. C. Goss served as director of a special drama workshop that produced a television play last summer on a local station, WTOP-TV. The young scribe is married and has one daughter.

### Nixon's Daughter Teaches At Mostly-Black School

Jill Nixon Eisenhower began practice teaching in a predominantly-Black Washington, D. C. elementary school. The President's 22-year-old daughter, taking graduate studies at Catholic University to get her teaching certificate, assigns the regular second grade teacher at St. Anthony's Catholic

Elementary Most of her are Black Sister Benedict, teaches a White 11-year-old boy. After she has been in the school for a few days, she has been told that her presence is a "blessing" to the school and the community.

### Georgia Merger

The two associations during 11 years of membership in that city Teachers' Union. Edna represents both the Georgia AAE's president and AAE's 6 agreed to insure, 6

wedding was covered by both Life and Post magazine. The story came out in the April 19, 1970 issue of Post. Jet carried an article stating that these 2 women have just liberated themselves by becoming united.

Bobby and Joan reside in a small but attractive apartment in upper Manhattan. Interestingly, their interview with me turned into a serious but unheated debate between each other.

Joan: "Everyone that read the 1970 articles and saw the pictures, recognized Bobby, but were not too sure about me."

They expected to get crank telephone calls but actually didn't get any except for Joan's ex-husband. He called the very next day to put in his dig.

When they were recognized on the street, people would say, (a waiter in a restaurant,) "That was a brave thing to do." Most would say, "Be happy," or, "I'm glad somebody brought it out," or "How has married life been?"

Bobby: "These have been mostly straight men. There have been no negative remarks made, at least to our faces."

Joan: "They recognize HER but not me."

Bobby: "That's because I'm more distinguishable I guess, because I'm a butch and so short."

Joan: "Some people have thought that she is my son."

Bobby: "I'm very short. That makes Joan look like a giant, but she's not. We work it out, though..."

They knew each other 6 months before they were joined. They met at an employment agency, both looking for work. In their wedding album, Bobby has written, "Two wonderful days of marital bliss. We feel as if we've just begun again. We feel new with different and deeper insight being placed with-in our daily routines - WE are beautiful."

Bobby: "We don't have differences. We do what has to be said, and that's all there is to it. We don't argue much, we have discussions. We had our



Bobby and Joan (with their dog, satellite.)

Bobby and Joan were married in the Church of the Holy Apostle, April 18, 1970. Their

The Third World Women's Caucus is a Women's Liberation organization formed last December to fight against the triple oppression of Third World Women by sexism, racism and economic exploitation. Our group of feminists from the Black, Latin and Asian communities meets every two weeks. (See calendar.)

We have organized Third World Women's workshops and literature tables at Women's Liberation conferences, written and spoken on Third World Women's Liberation. We are currently running an educational seminar series with speakers on subjects ranging from consumer's problems to Black feminist literature to Gay Liberation. The initial session of a Third World Women's consciousness raising group will be May 13. We also hope to produce a Third World Women's Liberation newsletter.

For more information, call Myrna Hill at 685-4106.

BEGAN 1970

1971 - Echo of Sacramento - 1972  
 "Lesbian Marriages"



# BLACK &

BLACKLESBIAN

What have you got to offer us? You wonder where we are and we say right in front of you. You offer us psychological rhetoric and we give you feelings and emotions which you charge are loud and violent. You cry dry tears while we bleed. You like to watch us dance for you but you never ask us to dance with you. You imagine/think/fantacize we fuck better which either keeps you on our backs or miles away. You assume we are mosly all dykes and the fem in us you try to butch. You use our blackness as an excuse more than we do and you never try to see the pain behind all our laughter. When you are around us you talk black and we find ourselves talking white and you even come to our parties bringing a 1969 Aretha Franklin record and when we confront you, you say we're too powerful to deal with and you don't come to our neighborhood after dark except in groups when your men have raped us (you too) for over 300 years. I can't call you my sister until you stop participating in my oppression. You can't have a struggle without all oppressed people--and black women, particularly black lesbians, have struggled harder than anyone. You need us and we can work and will work with you if only you accept us where we've been. where we are, where we come from.

Margaret

MY LIFE AS AN ADDICT  
by Ruby Watkins

Well, my life started as an everyday working woman. When I would come home from work, I

You hide from even me  
behind shiny black vinyl  
and big brassy zippers



African  
Ancestor

WOMEN'S STRIKE COALITION  
118 EAST 28th STREET  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016



SAMPLE



GRAND CENTRAL  
STATION

FIRST CLASS MAIL

TWO: OPPRESSION / RESISTANCE / LIBERATION

We will continue to demand our right to exist as productive, free, equal, black, gay beautiful women. We are not for a second about to forget that we are against racism, sexism, and heterosexual bias. There is a place for us in this society, and we will proudly take it at all costs. Even if it means breaking off from our so-called liberal white sisters and brothers, so-called liberal gay sisters and brothers, so-called liberal black sisters and brothers. Get-it-together, because we are.

--Elandria V. Henderson  
1971

1971



SOME BLACK MEN WITH THEIR GIRL  
FRIENDS CAME INTO AN ALL WOMENS  
DANCE OVER A YEAR AGO, TO HARRASS THE  
LESBIANS. THE WHITE WOMEN (WHO HAVE  
ALWAYS CLAIMED THERE WAS NO RACISM  
IN THE GAY FEMINIST MOVEMENT,) TOLD  
THEIR BLACK SISTERS TO GO UP AND  
DEAL WITH IT. AS A RESULT, A BLACK  
WOMAN APPROACHED ONE OF THE MEN AND  
HE KNOCKED HER FLAT ON HER ASS. WHAT  
DID THE WHITE WOMEN DO? NOTHING!!!!

# LETTERS OF SAPPHO

NEW YORK  
1972



## EGYPTIAN CIVILIZATION

Some say human culture started  
in the valley of the Yangtse and  
the Hoang Ho, or that it came up  
from black Africa, or west from the  
Euphrates, but it had begun more than  
4000 years BC.  
Edgar Cayce, a sleeping clair-  
voyant, said that humans began in  
all of these places, in all colors,  
simultaneously, (possibly in the  
pigment of the black man, as all  
colors come from black and none  
from white,) before Atlantis sank.  
(Adam and Eve were supposed to  
have been in the Atlantean period.)  
"The period in the world's  
existence from the present time  
being..."

October  
50¢ November  
December

LESBIANISM  
FEMINISM

are the records mentioned in the  
readings given through this  
channel on Atlantis, in April, 1932

A 4. "As given, that temple was  
destroyed at the time there was  
the last destruction in Atlantis.  
Yet, as the time draws nigh when  
the changes are to come about,  
there may be the openings of those  
three places where the records are  
one, to those that are the  
initiates in the knowledge of  
the One God: The temple by Iltar  
will then rise again. Also there  
will be the opening of the temple  
or hall of records in Egypt, and  
those records that were put there  
the heart of the Atlantean land  
may also be found there that  
have been kept, for those that  
are of that group. The records  
are One." (Nov. 12, 1933)  
There's evidence of gradual  
modification from dynastic times  
in Egypt.

If you can't afford 50¢  
see last page  
VOLUME 1 NUMBER 3

... was more  
equally divided, although the power  
and property all went to the Pharaoh.



The king then came in power, as it was  
the governments duty to control the



gay

versus

# Women's Black

versus

liberation

time. But this time instead of submitting to the cops abuse, the gays fought back; pulling up parking meters and throwing rocks at the cops.

There is friction among movements. The Gay Activists Alliance claim they are a one-issue-organization...., GAY! But where does that leave women? Women's liberation is often geared for white women, so where does that leave black women? Every movement today, the sit-ins, the pray-ins, the march-ins, the protests...., they have ALL followed behind the black movement for equal recognition and power.

## Not a New Idea

The women's liberation movement is a revival of feminist activity and protests that began as early as 1647.

In colonial days, or the frontier, a sex-based division of labor did not imply difference in status and all work was considered for the betterment of the community. But as communities and homesteads became wealthy, differences based on sex began to become both unequal and oppressive.

During world war I and II, when there was a shortage of labor, this country was run by women with well-paying jobs, opportunities for training and free child care centers. When the war was over, however, it became these women's 'patriotic' duty to let GI's take over their jobs and go home to produce babies instead of machinery.

The early women's rights movement was made up of educated

(next page)

15

Gay liberation was born on June 28, 1969 when New York police started to raid a gay bar in the west village, the Stonewall Inn. Gay bars were frequently raided, especially around election

Black women are in a dilemma when confronted as a woman and as black, and as a GAY, black woman. She is not wrong if she chooses to stand behind the feminist issue, and she is not wrong if she decides to wage the racial war. Yet it's wrong to deny either one. If the males weren't so chauvinistic in their approach to the women, it would be different. But they don't want the women to EVER have a chance. It wasn't her fault he was

18

ONE: LIVES AND LIFESTYLES

1. Albertson, Chris. Bessie. New York: Stein and Day, 1972; paperback ed. 1974. il \*

Frequently cited biography documents the lesbianism of Bessie Smith and other black blues singers and performers of the 1920s-1930s, such as Ma Rainey and Gladys Fergussan, male impersonator. Includes photos. Albertson's taped interviews with Ruby Smith concerning Bessie Smith have been deposited at the Library of Congress where they are being transcribed. Also see entry

castrated. SHE was raped, sold and abused too. She had to undergo suffering and humiliation to keep her family together. Everyone's always so worried about male pride. What about HER pride?



... "IT IS TRUE THAT SHE WAS A VICTIM OF THE MYTH THAT ONLY THE WOMAN, WITH HER DIMINISHED CAPACITY FOR MENTAL AND PHYSICAL LABOR, SHOULD DO DEGRADING HOUSEHOLD WORK. YET, THE ALLEGED BEBEPITO OF THE IDEOLOGY OF FEMININITY DID NOT ACCRUE TO HER. SHE WAS NOT SHELTERED OR PROTECTED. SHE WAS ALSO THERE IN THE FIELDS, ALONGSIDE THE MAN, TOLLING UNDER THE LASH FROM SUNRISE TO SUNDOWN " ANGELA DAVIS (Reflections)

1972



# N.B.F.O. Awareness and Solidarity

By Elley Roberts

In May 1973, a group of 30 Black women gathered together to discuss their collective experiences. They agreed on the need to establish an organization that would address the specific needs of the Black female who is forced to live in a society that is both sexist and racist. The National Black Feminist Organization emerged publicly on August 15, 1973.

The National Black Feminist Organization is addressing itself to many issues, which include working towards ending society of racism and sexism towards Black women, educating and reaching out to Black women from all walks of life in terms of understanding what feminism is and how it relates to Black women, encouraging Black women to come face to face with the reality of their lives, and helping Black women to become aware of the fact that they can upgrade and advance themselves economically, psychologically and dependently. N.B.F.O. is an organization that considers itself a part of the women's movement, but its main emphasis is to deal with Black women, to make Black women aware that there are alternatives. Part of their goal is to help Black women who have a lot of potential, but haven't learned how to use it to their advantage. Many Black women have pre-conceived ideas of what feminism is all about through reading or hearing about the (white) women's movement, and so there is always some doubt, upon first hearing about N.B.F.O., as to the organization's relevancy. However, members of N.B.F.O. are trying to make Black women understand the need for such an organization.

The weekend of Dec. 1, 1973, N.B.F.O. held its first Eastern regional conference on Black feminism at St. John's Cathedral, New York. Over 200 Black women attended to hear Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, Human Rights Commissioner Eleanor Holmes Norton and other outstanding Black women speak on why they were there, and

how much pleasure it gave them. Black women coming together to learn and change and just plain hang out with each other. Almost everybody signed up for and attended the three hour workshop sessions held on Saturday morning and afternoon. Workshop topics included "Black Feminist and the Labor Force," "Black Women and Welfare," "Black Feminist Organizing Politics," "Sex Role Stereotyping and the Black Child," and "The Triple Oppression of the Black Lesbian." Florence Kennedy, Lillian Ross, Carolyn Reed, Diane Lacey, Fannie Rignold and other Black women from different walks of life led the workshop discussions.

The conference went on through Sunday assessing, analyzing and exploring Black feminist issues, and out of that conference came awareness, solidarity and strength. "Feminism is the belief in the political, economic and social equality of the sexes. A Black feminist fights to eliminate racism and sexism with equal fervor."

First National Black Feminist Org Meeting included "Triple oppression"

## ON BEING A BLACK LESBIAN

-Linda Stroud and P.J.M.

As I sit here it's hard to believe that I am writing an article on being a black lesbian woman in a white male dominated society. Being a black woman feminist is one thing, but being a black lesbian feminist is another. Long ago I knew I could not identify with being a woman possessed by a super, ego-fet black male pig. That one fact alone set me apart from other black women. I had to be myself, which is an independent black lesbian woman. It was not easy giving up the prestige of being a "do right man's woman," but it felt very good. I became my own woman and formed an attitude of confidence.

Gay awareness was a trip in which I found a new me. My mind entered Freaksville. Previously I had had an excellent stereotype of what female queers were. They were women who rode cycles, dressed in leather jackets, and were all white - an example of the conditioning

that was learned from black culture: "only white people possess negative qualities," which adopted such nonsense from the white male power trip. Power tripping, when they could, was one thing black males learned well from their white brothers. Starting with line adopting all they went on down the line with those for their own needs in dealing with those persons they maintained power over: (1) women - straight or gay, and (2) children.

The main reason behind their macho pig attitudes is the idea of genocide, just another male idea to keep their women in line. Why did they have to think of such obnoxious bullshit? For the simple reason that, being insecure with their limited power ("the Man continues to make sure blacks stay in check") they had to devise a way to feel what power they possessed and in the most oppressive ways: (1) make baby factories out of their women, (2) control their children, and (3) harass and put down lesbians, keeping women and children down is easy, but it is

the black lesbian who really freaks them because she has no need for men emotionally or physically, and that they can not handle.

Now I am in a woman's world, but the are sex masters still exists. Black women are looked upon as nymphomaniac "not numbers," and "hot pieces of ass." Black lesbians are labeled "butch," meaning aggressive. For some reason I had assumed that lesbians were beyond these oppressive definitions of the male world, but I realized soon that was pure fantasy. It's easier to take an attitude than to re-evaluate. If you think I am negative, sometimes I am. Since I come from blackness I have not been successful at completely re-evaluating all my ideas and opinions.

As far as taking racism and sexism from other women, I am tired of just being a color first, and a sex machine second. I am a black lesbian woman in a woman's world hoping to create a Sisterhood is Powerful attitude with other lesbian women.

Herself 2:6 Oct/Nov 1973

TURN AROUND!



from Echo of SAPPHO 1973 issue 4

Goes to this article

1973



# Marymount, John Jay, and the Third World

by Lucille Colin

What do you get when cross the women's groups at Marymount College and John Jay College of Criminal Justice??? ... A third world women's Conference? I knew it was something I had to go to, but, was I 'third world'? I wasn't sure they'd let me in, then again, surely some of the staff at Marymount must be planning to go to a conference their school had organized and how many 'third world' nuns did I know?

I got to the conference at 11:30. It had just begun. There were only about fifty or sixty women. Not many people seemed to know about the conference. However, the small size of the conference didn't effect the enthusiasm of the women there.

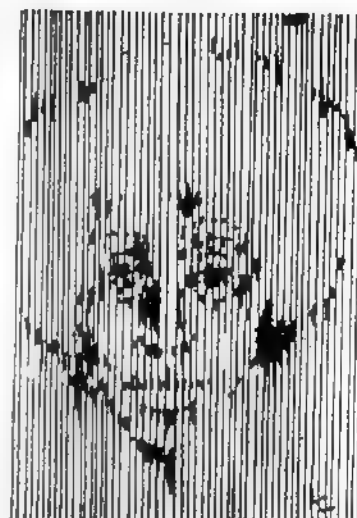
The conference started with an opening speech by Audre Lourde. It then broke up into two workshops. The workshops were conducted on a consciousness-raising basis. Some of the things discussed in the workshops

were: a definition of third world women; Audre said she felt all women were third world as all women are outside the power structure. She said that we are all programmed to hate ourselves as all minority group people are. She feels this is the cause for fighting amongst women. One woman said she felt all women were third world because all women are taught that they can't get along without a man. She said that although she was black, while growing up she was always treated differently than her brother.

One woman expressed her fear of black women and of the conference. Most of the women there had only been in totally white C-R groups and conferences. We felt the need to form a mixed C-R group (Anyone interested call Majority Report and leave your name and number. 929-9862.)

I spoke to some women who had never been to a conference before and had never been involved in the women's movement. It was nice that they had come.

The conference ended with a social and plans for a second conference similar to this one. Sonia Roberts, one of the women who planned the conference would like to hear from anyone interested in helping with the new one. Her number is 787-5965.



## a new view

### BUTCHES CORNER

From the sexual side

#### BUTCH SEX PARTNER

Here, there seems to be more disagreement than anywhere else. Mainly because here more females can move about freely. NO? Now we will take the first breakdown:

There are Butches and there are Stone Butches.

#### 1- 'STONE BUTCH'

The Stone Butch seems to have a very one-sided sexual drive. I've heard a few say that they expect Femmes to just lay back and enjoy the sexual act. All you Femmes that just lay back, have you ever really sat back and tried to find out why? Maybe she wants you so bad that she is afraid to impose on you for equal enjoyment. I can still remember when Butches thought they were the only ones that were Gay and so, believing that their sexual partners did not enjoy what they enjoyed.

Stone Butches were dildos. In all of my 17 years as a Butch, I can honestly say I've never seen a dildo except in movies or in a joke book. Plus this, I was under the impression that one received satisfaction from contact with their sex object. Funny relieving satisfaction from something bought from a store! I would be more inclined to believe that such items would be used by a person more male orientated than a Butch, yes? Butches of this category also, are supposed to have stretched their clothes to extreme lengths. Well now, I'm inclined to believe that if this were possible, a woman could eliminate all sexual contact with another. They could simply stretch their own. As for that male organism they sometimes possess, there are scientific studies to prove that transvestites are usually heterosexual once they find out what sex they belong to.

#### 2- 'BUTCH'

Now we get to the ones that are the real victims of controversy, the plain, ordinary Butch who walks the street every day in a very casual manner. You know, the one you walked across the street from because to pass her would have caused all sorts of problems for your mind and body. Well,

9- SOME WHITE WOMEN HAVE A TENDENCY TO THINK ALL BLACK WOMEN ARE BUTCHES NOT REALIZING THEY HAD TO FIGHT HARDER TO SURVIVE.

I've heard it said that she is just trying to be a Butch because some man has done her

wrong; you know, she was raped by her father or something

Like that. I wonder what happened to all these that women Abuse by the opposite sex isn't the main reason for Butchism. Heaven knows if it were, there would be many more than there are. You remember that famous saying, 'A Butch wants a mother, so she goes with motherly images.' NOW, that one really gets it. I can't remember when my mother leaked like some of the girls I've had. As a matter of fact I don't believe she ever has, because of the hurting she put on my rear-end for always playing with the fellas. I remember the other girls in the neighborhood always thought that I was giving away much sex because the fellas always came to me when they had nowhere to go and wanted to be free and real. Come to think of it, I just interfered with another myth that one about the fellas not wanting to associate with or date me. I'm just as popular now as I was then and will always be if my personality stays the same.

Good at sports? Well now, during my High School

years there was this girl that always managed to beat me. When I saw her net too long ago, (and she is still beating me,) she has six children and she married the star of the male basketball team.

Well all-in-all, I guess you just have to take second best sometimes. I say it sincerely because I don't believe that I could control six children and a man. One would really have to go.

by Donella Stanley (Donnie)  
Send replies to Donella c/o  
Sisters For Liberation  
P.O. Box 263 Bklyn 11217

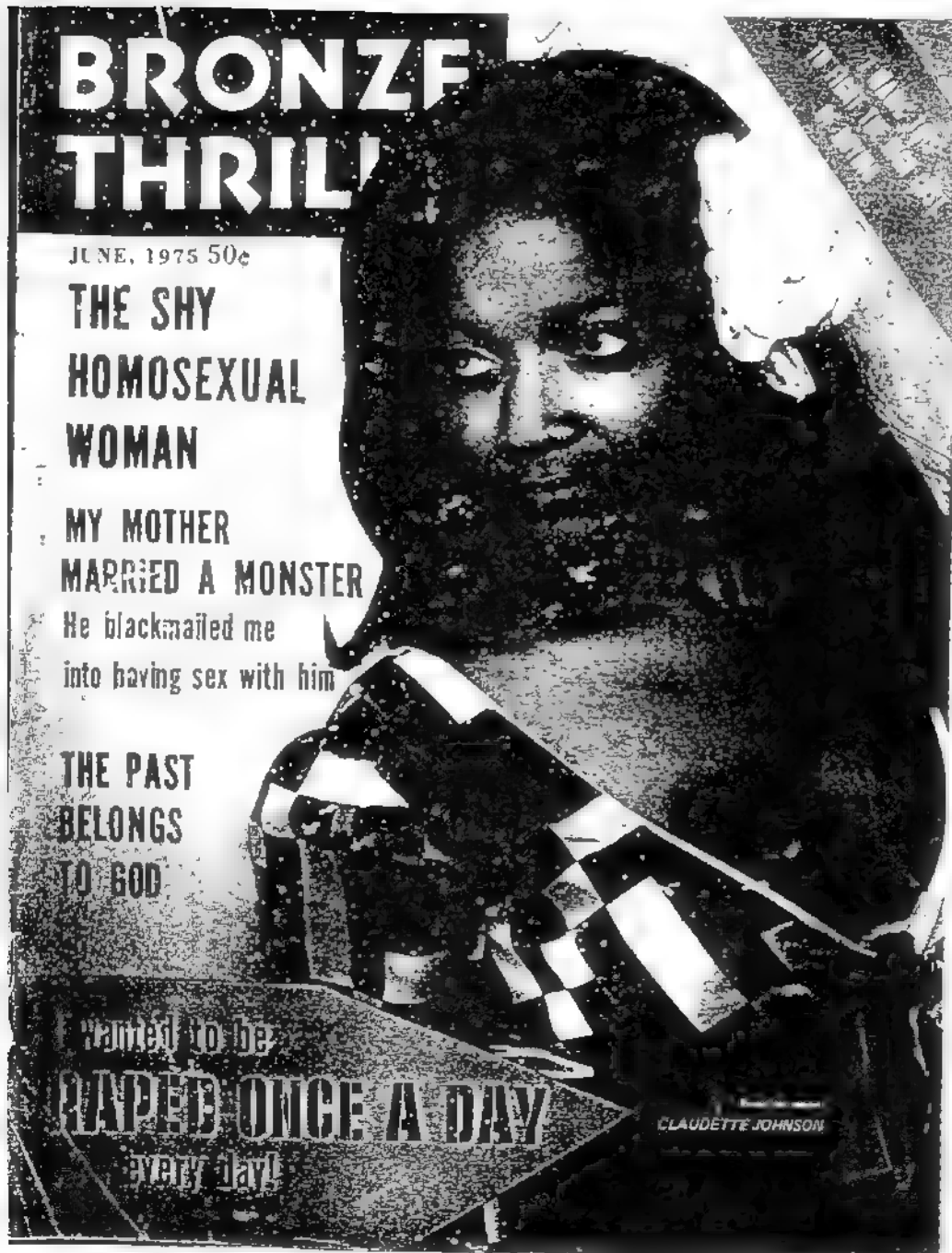
1973



5. **BLACK WOMEN'S LOG: AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR AND BY BLACK WOMEN.** 1974. Springfield, MA by the Sisterhood Alliance. It is the purpose of this magazine to summon our strengths and talent, and move forward as a powerful unit. Through the magazine, we hope to facilitate the sharing of thoughts, needs, problems, possible solutions, and goals of Black women. Our magazine is offered as a resource to increase our strength and solidarity, and to develop a new and richer appreciation of ourselves and our sisters.

34. Angelou, Maya. Gather Together in My Name. New York: Random House, 1974; Bantam, 1975. \*

Maya continues her autobiography. Includes story of two lesbians who lived together and worked as prostitutes in 1940s. Maya joins in business with them but is often derogatory of them. Illustrates Black attitudes towards lesbians. Especially chapters 11, 12, and 13.

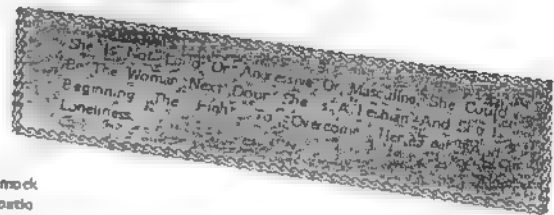


A. Fiction

[13]. Aronkadea, Ed. The Bary Heras Heaven. Berkeley: Self-published, 1975; reprint ed., 1976.



# THE SHY HOMOSEXUAL WOMAN



A cozy Melbourne living room. The house is mock colonial with two camquet trees in tubs on the patio. Mugs of coffee are being handed around, low tempo rock music fills the gaps in the small talk. A large female dog called Horace sprawls on the carpet. It could be a discussion group, a commerce meeting, a mothers' club. It is, in fact, a social night for homosexual women.

There can be no generalizations about their appearance. They are as varied as any gathering of women in any other house in Melbourne that evening.

And that is the whole point. There is not a single radical, liberated, aggressive butch among them. They are the proverbial silent majority of lesbianism, ordinary women with almost nothing in common except their reference for relationships — sexual and otherwise — with people of their own sex.

↑ One

They are part of a group, purposely without a name and without a structure, which has been meeting in Melbourne for the past six months under the guiding hand of Claudia, a small, thin-waisted, long-haired girl, crisp and peppy and gentle. Every mum's dream is Claudia. Except that she loves and lives with Helen and won't pretend otherwise.

"I know from experience that there are hundreds of women who are in their 20s and 30s — perhaps even older — before they can admit to themselves that they are homosexual and who are full of fear and confusion until they can talk it out with someone," Claudia said.

Continued on Next Page

I'm a lesbian, a feminist, and I'm Black. I know there are problems with splitting within those groups but to survive I can't separate myself from any one of them even though at times I'm isolated from all three.

—Pat Parker  
1975

Red Jordan Archibuteau, Red, is Strill's model in the book. In fiction the life and experience of the lesbian world is the gay bar, and the chronicler of the loneliness, struggle, and violence, and economic survival of the lives of Black women and lesbians are consistent themes throughout.

Red Jordan Archibuteau is the only Black lesbian writer discovered who explores the gay bar, and the chronicler of the loneliness, struggle, and violence, and economic survival of the lives of Black women and lesbians are consistent themes throughout.

Red Jordan Archibuteau is the only Black lesbian writer discovered who explores the gay bar, and the chronicler of the loneliness, struggle, and violence, and economic survival of the lives of Black women and lesbians are consistent themes throughout.

32. Anonymous. "Black Lesbianism: Reflections." *Brown Sister's* 1 (1975): 22-26. 24

Process of transition to lesbianism and a stronger sense of self was made difficult for the author by political complexities and ignorance of being lesbian. Yet, made easier by supportive friends and the realization that she needn't be a fragmented self due to race, sex or lesbianism, for these are the connecting realities of her life.

1974 - 1975



# THIRD WORLD GAY WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION SALSA-SOUL

The necessity for third world gay women to organize in our own interest is paramount. Existing gay organizations have neither welcomed our participation, nor championed our concerns. Out of this reality, the Salsa Soul Sisters was organized, and continues to grow. We function as a loosely structured collective, recognizing the varied age, academic class, and economic differences that exist in the group. We see this diversity as enriching our experiences and contributing to the emotional and intellectual growth of the organization. We come from every vocational field ranging academically from Doctorates to elementary school drop-outs. Each member is welcomed, valued and respected. We attempt to make a space for our sisters who have been incarcerated, or who have not fared well in racist America. They are an integral part of the organization and contribute greatly to its success.

We organized around the commonality of our problems as Black and Hispanic women. I.e. racism in the gay community, cross cultural conflicts, the need for positive gay third world models. In a society that continually attempts to play one group off against the other, while exploiting both groups, Salsa Soul is unique. We realize the commonality of our situation in this society and the fact that we need each other's strength better grow, exercise and progress through unity.

Our immediate goal is to provide a place where we can learn and get to know each other. We also want to provide an alternative to the "gay bar rip off." Our meetings include discussions, panel presentations, movies, game nights (where you can learn to play chess, backgammon, cards, etc.). The long range goals will, of course, be determined by the group, but some of us would like to:

1. Establish a counseling service particularly for younger gay women
2. Establish a training program for our sisters in prison
3. Establish a place in the gay community for third world women
4. Be able to publish our own newsletter

We hope to become an organization of third world gay women who feel joy as well as pride in being able to say, "we did it ourselves." Meaning, we started, formed, maintained and governed an organization that is helpful and inspiring to third world gay women. We share in the strengthening and productivity of the whole gay community.

I'M NOT CRAZY, JUST DIFFERENT

—by Lea Hopkins

TODAY

I am a Woman

I am a Black woman

I am a black woman who is an Unwed Mother

I am a Lesbian Woman

I am Proud

Fearless

Arrogant

and Humble

I can Cope with me

Can you?

4-7-76

10/26/76

1976



Everybody says so. They think we live & was an action in a ballroom with  
- "The Sincere" & "The Sincere"  
- "The Sincere" & "The Sincere"  
- "The Sincere" & "The Sincere"

ent to jail,  
ause I'm  
ne Doe  
y down the  
out because  
ck and  
ey.



Deborah: Every day  
Torch/La Antorcha What

Deborah what basically

Torch/La Antorcha. Did they tell you straight-out that they wouldn't prosecute the other people?

Deborah Yes They told

WASH STATE OPPRESSION WORKERS REVOLUTION

STOP

STONEWALL

SMASH

DEFEND

LESBIANS and GAYS

OUR OPPRESSOR IS THE SAME

OUR DIVISIONS ARE THEIR STRENGTHS

PLAZOFFALU, WILLIAM?  
BLACK PANTHER PARTY  
CITY UNIVERSITY  
DAF 30 048. W 2492  
SOCIOLOGY, TUBI. AN  
31 11 1993  
PLAZOFFALU, WILLIAM?  
BLACK PANTHER PARTY  
CITY UNIVERSITY  
DAF 30 048. W 2492  
SOCIOLOGY, TUBI. AN  
31 11 1993



# March 9 through March 17

# Gay's Week

Issue #1, March 16, 1977 50¢

WHEN we began publishing GAYSWEEK three weeks ago, we planned for our calendar of events to grow gradually into a format that would include reviews, features and articles of interest to the entire gay community. We thought it best to start out with a goal that was realistic: to list, as completely as possible, the activities of the men and women who make the New York gay community what it is. A group of lesbian writers meet in a community center; a wrestling club meets in a back room bar. We list their activities and the entire spectrum in between. And people have told us that we've done a damn good job of it so far. Of course, there are probably events or groups that we haven't covered. If we haven't, it's because we didn't know what they were planning. Tell us what you're up to.

But that still ain't news! People have been calling and writing, asking when we'll start running articles. Answer: we're starting now. And once again we'll do only what we can do well. We're pleased to say that John Alfred Avant, who has contributed work to *The New Republic*, begins, with this issue, to present his film criticism as a regular feature. There will be more; other features will be added in the coming weeks.

New York's gay publishing scene is littered with the carcasses of half-assed, half-considered, well-meant publishing ventures. The gay community desperately needs a newspaper, not another failure.

Yes, GAYSWEEK will grow; but only at its own pace.



GEORGIA BROOKS is a member of "Jemima," a group of black lesbian writers. This week the group is sponsoring an evening of poetry reading at the Women's Center in Chelsea.

2. Betty, Delores. "Come Out, Come Out..." *Women: A Journal of Liberation* 5:2 (1977): 47-49. Problems and joys of a Black lesbian minister when she "comes out." After leaving the pulpit, she finds she is needed more as a counselor in the gay community.

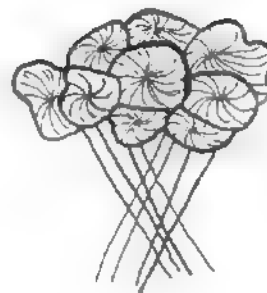
The near non-existence of Black lesbian literature which other Black lesbians and I so deeply feel has everything to do with the solitudes of our lives, the total suppression of identity, that all Black women, lesbian or not must face.

--Barbara Smith  
Concussions, October 1977

... An Evening of  
Poetry Reading

at  
The Women's Center  
243 West 20th Street  
New York City

Saturday March 12, 1977



JEMIMA is an independent writers' workshop. Our members are multi-talented women: poets, novelists and journalists. We are a newly-formed collective, working together since January 1977.

MEMBERS (in reading order)

Donna allegra	-	inspiration
candy boyce	-	printer
georgia brooks	-	moderator/publicity
linda brown	-	graphics
robin christian	-	publicity
beheah fisher	-	support
yvonne flowers	-	inspiration
irare sabasu	-	publicity
berni smith	-	good taste
sandra mc cutchen	-	support (at the door)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION  
CALL

(212) 427-9274 (days 'till 7pm)  
(212) 799-1338 (eves 'till 1am)

4. Bogus, S. Diane. "Mom de Flums." *Lesbian Tide* 7:3 (November/December 1977): 24-25. 11 \*

In a letter to her mother, post-teacher Diane Bogus searches after a self-definition as the non-biological mother in a lesbian family unit.

1977



Copyright © by L. Brown

## MEMBERS

Donna allegra  
candy boyce  
georgia brooks  
linda brown  
robin christian  
beheah fisher  
yvonne flowers  
sandra mc cutchen  
irare sabasu  
berni smith

# Jemima.

an independent black lesbian writers workshop

would like to share an  
evening of poetry reading.

PLACE:- THE WOMEN'S CENTER/243 W 20th St / NYC  
- Between 7th & 8th Aves.

DATE:- Saturday • March 12, 1977

TIME:- 8 p.m. \* AN AFFAIR FOR  
WOMEN ONLY

DONATION - \$1.00  
\$ more if you can, less if you can't \$

FOR INFORMATION:-

Call - Linda 427-9274 (all day 'till 11pm)  
Georgia 799-1338 (eves 'till 1am)

5. Allison, Dorothy. "Confrontation Black White: Interview with Ginny Apuzzo and Betty Powell." *Quest* 3:4 (Spring 1977): 34-46. 11 \*

Black and white lesbian activists discuss their facilitator roles at the Racism and Sexism Conference held by the National Black Feminist Organization and Sagaris Institute in 1976. Explores relationship of racism, sexism, and heterosexism. Useful for women designing structures for discussing these issues.

6. CHARISMA. 1977. Cincinnati, OH. Quarterly newsletter  
Black Career Women, Inc.





Let's spend an afternoon  
in the park together.

We can share our  
poetry · journals · prose · essays  
short stories · music (bring your guitars, flutes, bells, etc.)

COME TO: Central Park

DATE: August 21, 1977 \* Sunday

TIME: 3 PM

DIRECTIONS: We will assemble between 2 & 3 PM  
on the northwest corner of  
6th Street and 5th Avenue.  
Then we will proceed to the  
workshop sites.

rsvp and info :- candy (212) days PL 1-1200 ext. 177  
· evens. 583-8173

berni (212) 881-2279 evens.

OR

SEE YOU THERE !!!!!

raindate: August 28, 1977 \* Sunday

*new edition*  
**AZALEA** Magazine  
by and for third world lesbians. publishing since 1977



1977



BLACK/ETHNIC/RAINBOW DYKES...  
in...DYKE, a quarterly  
spring '77



We are looking for material from Lesbians from all different ethnic groups. How you as an individual Lesbian and how other Lesbians in your ethnic group relate to Lesbian issues and the rest of life. How your origins and the politics and aesthetic of your ethnic group shape your consciousness. We hope that Dykes who identify with this will write about any aspect of their lives which expresses their experience of being an ethnic Dyke. We are looking for graphic as well as written material. We pay for everything that we print. Deadline January 30 1977



ANNOUNCING CONDITIONS: FIVE  
THE BLACK WOMEN'S ISSUE

Rachel Berry

Guest edited  
by  
Lorraine Bethel  
and  
Barbara Smith

1977





# THE REALITY OF THE BLACK LESBIAN

by S. Diane Bogus

In the April, 1974 issue of Ebony magazine, in an article entitled "Has The Sexual Revolution Bypassed Blacks?" Dr. Robert Staples stated:

"One of the effects of the sexual revolution is the increase in 'visible' homosexuality. It is one area of the changing sexual values that has significant black participation. However, the increase in people assuming overt gay life styles is largely confined to black males."

this prefaces his later statement which reads:

"Despite a black male shortage, relatively few black women have joined the community of overt lesbians. But since female homosexuals are not as visible as male homosexuals, the number of black lesbians is difficult to determine. Like the black male homosexual, many black lesbians are deeply involved in the white homosexual community."

What concerns us is that in this piece, Dr. Staples makes three valid, but albeit, naked points: (1) that there are relatively few overt Black lesbians, (2) that that number is difficult to determine, and (3) that of those who do exist overtly, many are "deeply involved in the white homosexual community."

When I first encountered Dr. Staples' statements in that issue of Ebony, I was enraged. I was then, and remain now, an overt Black lesbian of the many with whom I associate; I took personal exception to his unsubstantiated claim that in their smallness of number, the countable majority of Black lesbians were attached to the white homosexual community.

To me, this was not true. If anything, the majority of overt Black lesbians were not even susceptible to a counting, not withstanding being categorically misplaced. However, my belief that indisposed numbers of overt sisters do exist was a moot point if none came forward. So, I sat and wrote the "letters editor" at Ebony a fiery self-proclamation.

I wanted the public to be given the chance to consider that one sister, perhaps of many, did not want or need the association with group gays, nor the apparent approbation of such an identity. In addition to which, I wanted it understood that Dr. Staples' article was numerically negating, and categorically misplacing the lives of many sisters, (and brothers), yet unspoken, unspoken for good reason.

Those reasons hinge primarily on the occasion for Dr. Staples' article. It came, of course, as a pulse beat of the changing sexual attitudes and mores in our country. Yet, where homosexuality is concerned, Dr. Staples' article represents what appears to be the thought of both the white and black communities. Large there...

15. Aronstein, Ted. "Susie Q." In *Tru to Life: Adventure Stories*, Vol. 1, pp. 102-132. Edited by Judy Green. Oakland: Black Press, 1970.

This collection of twenty short stories by working class women includes a piece by Ted Aronstein. Susie Q., forced into hustling by economic misfortune, struggles to leave her exploitative pimp, and finds herself becoming involved with a Black lesbian at a gay bar. The anthology preserves working class language throughout as an integral aspect of story telling, not to be separated from content and ideas.

SOME THOUGHTS ON BLACK HOMOPHOBIA  
OR  
YOU AIN'T A PROPER NIGGAH

BY JGWENDOLYN!!

This discussion is dedicated to all my beautiful, strong, Black Lesbian sisters who must daily contend with racism, homophobia and sexism, to all my Lesbian sisters who must support, love and confront each other, and to my entire Black family which must take responsibility for our liberation.

## INTRODUCTION

This discussion is a beginning attempt at understanding the hostility, rage and fear expressed by one oppressed group (Black heterosexuals) towards another oppressed group (Black Lesbians).

Some people may attack this discussion as being divisive, not "politically correct", or even racist. The basis for these thoughts however, is an understanding that all forms of oppression are inter-related. Therefore it is impossible for any one group to achieve liberation while keeping it's collective foot on the neck of another group.

As distasteful as it may be this topic must be actively dealt with. For divisions and hierarchies of oppression amongst oppressed peoples (in this case Black heterosexuals and Black homosexuals) serves only the interest of the dominant culture.

The responsibility for our liberation begins with us, and that responsibility extends to the need for criticism, dialogue and active struggle. This discussion does not pretend to be a final statement but rather an invitation to dialogue.

It is a standard heterosexual notion (picked up by Black heterosexuals) that Lesbianism is a "threat" to the family. Now aside from the obvious absurdity (it refutes the experiences of Black lesbians with families), this statement has no real meaning within the context of the Black Community. In the dominant culture, the family refers to the basic unit of production--the nuclear family with a mother, father and 2.5 children. However, the concept of family is a much broader one to peoples of African descent. Paola Freire describes the process by which these "alien values" are incorporated into the thinking of an oppressed group as "cultural invasion".

## PART III

The Black Lesbian is vulnerable to homophobic attacks (and not only by Blacks), particularly if she represents that dreaded species, "the uppity woman", and equally threatening, she's also an "uppity nigger". Some see her as a warrior, a threat to the status quo.

Much of the Black Community maintains a somewhat hopeful relationship with the dominant culture. Most people would like to "make it"; making it implies being like the oppressor class, which in turn means internalizing some aspects of the oppressor's myths and values. Of course this internalization occurs on such a thorough and subtle level that it is sometimes difficult to discern. One example...



#144

(Re-typed by JR Roberts and Chris Czernik, July 1978, from a photo-copy of the original manuscript, which was illegible. The original photo-copy is on file at the Archive of Contemporary History at the University of Wyoming, Box 3334, Laramie, Wyoming 82071. Write for permission to quote or reprint.)



Hazel Crawley [1923-1978] \*

Hazel Crawley was an African American Lesbian. She lived in Brooklyn, New York where she worked as a writer, performer, and craftsman. Her published works and photographs of her are in the Lesbian History Archives Collection.

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PO Box 1238, New York, NY 10016 212-876-7331

# DOUBLE INDEMNITY

The Negro Lesbian In The  
"Straight" White World

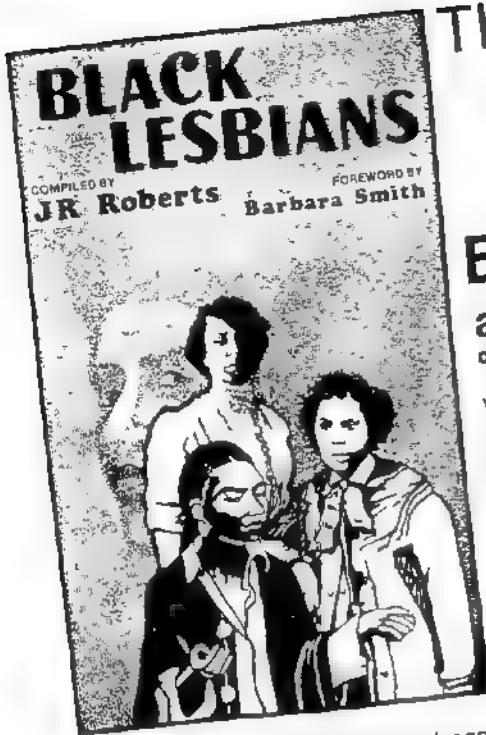
Eleanor Hunter  
Sociology 290  
(Dr. Cayton)  
December 9, 1969

*Greta Achiller & Tom Seid  
"Greta's Guide" 1978  
A short film about 2 Third World dykes  
For further information  
call Picker Film Institute  
City College of N.Y.  
690-8168-8173*

3. "Betty." In Word Is Out: Stories of Some of Our Lives, pp. 202-215. Edited by Nancy Adair and Casey Adair. New York and San Francisco: Dell and New Slide, 1978. p. 11\*

In this book-sequel to the acclaimed film of the same title, Betty Powell, Black lesbian activist, talks about growing up, family, becoming a lesbian, relationships with the Black community and white people, her work-life, and being an activist. Supplemented with photos and new material not included in the film.





The  
Naiad Press  
presents  
**BLACK LESBIANS**  
an Annotated Bibliography  
compiled by J R Roberts

with 20 illustrations 112 pages  
Appendix, Index, Sources, Organizations  
ISBN 0-930044-21-5 L.C. 81-80662

**\$5.95**  
individuals

**\$8.00**  
institutions

**Partial List of Contents**  
Lives and Lifestyles — Oppression — Resistance  
and Liberation — Music and Musicians —  
Periodicals

✕ "It will be a great deal harder now for anybody — Black or white, male or female, homophobic or racist — to claim that there are no Black Lesbians and other Lesbians of color. This bibliography puts that lie to rest. This book should be available in every library in this country, particularly those in Black communities. It should be in the library of every women's studies program and community women's center in this country. And everyone now reading this foreword should make it their business to see that it reaches such places and many more besides. Distribute this book is about supporting Black Lesbian freedom."

— Barbara Smith

*Third World Women "Spectrum" 4 (Feb 1979)  
the whole issue includes "Documentary"  
Hidden History on movement? a Black  
Gay Bibliography by J.R. Roberts, with 20  
Athena Index,*

Gay Community News, April 27 1979  
**News Notes**

**black lesbians to print bibliography**

CAMBRIDGE, MA — Black Lesbians. An Annotated Bibliography, compiled by J.R. Roberts, will bring together nearly 200 references to books and materials by and/or about black lesbians. This pioneering work documents black lesbian life, culture, oppression, and struggle in the United States since the 19th century. Many of the materials were written or created by black lesbians themselves. Due to racial, sexual, and heterosexual biases, these materials have often been hidden in a sea of white lesbian information and omitted from other bibliographies about black women or lesbians. By focusing solely on black lesbian experiences and struggles, the bibliography recognizes the unique experiences of black, female, and lesbian living in a society controlled by those who are white, male and heterosexual. The bibliography includes photographs and graphics, and a foreword by Barbara Smith, a Boston area black lesbian feminist activist and critic.

In order to publish the first edition of 2,000 copies, approximately \$1500 is needed. If you wish to contribute, you may do so by mailing a check or money order payable to "Brundage Hill Research Publications" to J.R. Roberts, Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge, MA 02139.

**black lesbian bibliography**

CAMBRIDGE, MA — A bibliography documenting works on the lives of black lesbians will be published in the late spring. J.R. Roberts, a white woman, began the bibliography as a project in the Goddard-Cambridge feminist studies program. In an article in the February issue of *Safouner*, Roberts explained that she realized that people spoke of "the lesbian experience" as if it were one "experience." Attempting to find material that reflected the diversity of the lesbian community, she started to search out material that wasn't white and middle class.

Most of the 150 to 160 listings that have been compiled to date are from recent times, but several extend farther back in history. Roberts collected material from lesbian, gay and women's journals, as well as from black journals, scientific magazines, and tapes, interviews and research papers. Roberts has attempted to include all the possible information on black lesbians in her bibliography. A review by a black man of Ann Shockley's book *Loving Her* will be contrasted with Beverly Smith's review of the same book that appeared in *GCN*.

Roberts told *Safouner* that being white made the project difficult. "I'm not the one to be interpreting. My whiteness gets in the way of trying to talk about context and issues."

The bibliography needs financial sponsors. Any one interested in contributing should contact J.R. Roberts at the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, MA 02139.

*Gay Comm. News  
v. 6, #21 2/2/79  
p. 2*





*Feminist Journal*, vol. 2, #2, 1979 AC. "H"  
A Feminist Journal for the South

## I Didn't Go Back There Anymore: Mabel Hampton Talks About the South

This interview was transcribed and edited from tapes made for *Feminist* by the Lesbian Herstory Archives. Joan Beale of the Archives is the interviewer. Ed. - Mianie Bruce Pratt

J - Mabel just wants to introduce herself.  
M - I'm Mabel Hampton. I was born on May the 2nd, nineteen two, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. And I left there when I was 7 years old, and now I'm 71. Grandma said I was so small that "your head was as big as a silver dollar." She said that she did all she could to make me to grow but I was so small. One day she was making the bed and getting things together after she fed the chickens. She never let me lay in the bed, I lay in the rocking chair. And this day she put the clothes in the chair, when she carried me outside, she forgot I was in and shook the clothes out and shook me out in the garden, out in the ground. And Grandma was so upset that she'd hurt me. I never could drink milk. I never drank milk until I was 26 years old. Milk would always give me a pain in the stomach. I liked the milk but the milk didn't like me. So I grew up with Grandma. My grandmother took care of me. My mother died one month after I was born. She was poisoned, which left me with just my grandma, mother's younger sister Lelia, and myself. We had a house and lived on a street---I forgot the name of the street---we had chickens, we had hogs, we had garden vegetables, grapes and things, and a big back yard.

# A CELEBRATION OF BLACK WOMENHOOD

LANEY COLLEGE  
SAT., SEPT. 22, '79

**SISTERS:** At this time, we are in the planning stage of this conference & need your interest, skills, ideas, time and money. We invite you to contribute articles, workshalls, photography or to facilitate a workshop. For further information, please contact Elizabeth 653-1991 or Annmah 654-5369

A CONFERENCE FOR AND  
PRESENTED BY BLACK WOMEN









# the West Sider

DECEMBER • 1979

WEST SIDE DISCUSSION GROUP.  
...one of the oldest and largest gay  
organizations in the U.S. Est. 1956  
26 NINTH AVENUE (at 14th Street)  
See MAIL Address inside.

## west side women

By GINNY

Gay Women's West Side had one of the most stimulating and controversial evenings in recent memory on November 6 when Betty Powell and Gwendolyn Weindling joined us for a discussion on "Racism in the Lesbian Community." I believe it is safe to say that no one walked out of that discussion with a neutral feeling about the experience.

The purpose of the discussion was presented as an effort to open a dialogue between Third World and white lesbians. This objective was only partly realized. I felt that many of the white women who participated were intimidated by the righteous anger expressed by our Third World sisters. This feeling of intimidation led to anger on the part of some women who felt that Betty and Gwendolyn were interested only in their own agenda and did not wish to engage in a true dialogue. Anger can be a constructive emotion. However, I saw little inclination on the part of many of the

white women present (myself included) to challenge the assumptions and assertions of our Third World sisters. For that reason I feel responsibility for the lack of dialogue must be shared by everyone.

The second point I wish to raise with my Third World sisters is that while I understand their anger from both an historic and contemporary perspective, I question whether it is appropriate or constructive to focus it on white lesbians. After all, as women we share many, though clearly not all, of the oppressions perpetrated by the straight, white, male power structure. In short, we have more in common as women than we have differences based on race or ethnicity. We clearly have much to gain by pooling our energy, talents and ideas and much to lose if we fall into the age-old divide and conquer trap.

Each woman who reads this column will respond in her own way based on her individual experiences and beliefs; whether you agree or disagree I hope you will join us if we are able to present "Racism in the Lesbian Community, Part 2" in January or February.



JANUARY • 1980

## west side women

By GINNY

In this first West Sider of the new year and decade, I'd like to mention some of the special evenings women have shared at WSDG recently and those we're looking toward.

Our Halloween Party and Thanksgiving Dinner-Dance both continued well into the evening--a sign of the good time we all had. While many women are to be thanked for their work and participation in these events, I'd like to give a special thank-you to Sam and Dennis of MCC, who were exceptionally gracious and helpful with the

### Thanksgiving festivities.

On January 22 Gwendolyn Weindling (and perhaps another co-leader) will join me for part 2 of "Racism in the Lesbian Community." Based on the reactions to the beginning of our dialogue on this issue, I'm sure a great many women will join us this evening as we move the discussion to a much deeper level this time around.

If you like to party--and don't we all at least once in a while--keep February 12 open. We're planning a Valentine's Day Social; Fran, who kept us dancing all night at our last two parties, will be our DJ again.

# 1980 and beyond...



# NATIONAL BLACK LESBIAN CONFERENCE

By Becky Bertha

From October 17th to 19th, 1980, two hundred black lesbians from eight different states met at the San Francisco Women's building for the First Black Lesbian Conference. Becoming Visible was the theme of this gathering, which focused on the Western regional states. The Conference Committee, eight incredibly dedicated women, held benefits and met regularly for nearly a year to plan this landmark event.

They did a magnificent job. Everything was extremely well organized, from the shuttles meeting women at the airport (some run by gay men), to the on-site child care and vegetarian lunch, provided by non-black women, the striking conference posters and T-shirts, sold in the vendors area, and the hospitable housing.

Saturday morning, in addition to the two excellent keynote speakers listed on the attractive programs, an extra treat was the appearance of Angela Davis. From all three addresses, and the workshops which followed, several important themes emerged which participants gave a great deal of thought and discussion.

One was the concept of internalized racism, and how it has kept us from respecting ourselves and each other. The significance of class differences was another. Heavily stressed were the dangers of a compartmentalized self-image (seeing oneself as primarily black, female or lesbian, and not as a whole person). While a strong call was made for unity among ourselves, suggestions were also offered for utilizing other organizations. Becoming Visible came to mean not only our visibility to others, but also to each other, through networking within the black lesbian community.

A total of twenty-one workshops covered relationships, family, health, the arts, employment, and politics. Some which drew especially large turnouts were Interracial Relationships, Black Women and Feminism, and How to Survive in Predominantly White Organizations. The atmosphere in all of them was supportive, positive, and respectful of differences, providing safety for a surprising degree of personal openness. (Also surprising was the diversity of the participants' abilities--giving the impression that the skills to do any and everything were right in that building.)

Even trouble with the sound for Saturday night's entertainment could not disperse the general high. The audience was patient, and the poetry of Avocet, dances of Lambert Van Buuren and Marcell Hill, and music of Gwen Avery followed by Casselberry and Dupree were well worth waiting for.

I am very grateful to all of the groups who helped make it possible for me to attend. Philadelphia area black lesbians who couldn't make it to the San Francisco weekend--your chance is right around the corner. January 16th to 18th, the Eastern Regional Black Lesbian Conference will take place in New York. Don't miss it!

THE EASTERN REGIONAL BLACK LESBIAN CONFERENCE open to all women will be held January 16-18, 1981 in N.Y. City. YWCA Conference, c/o Johnson, 75-15 41st Ave., Apt. D45, Jackson Heights, NY 11357. Registration, \$15 at door.

(Editor's Note: Becky Bertha and Giovanni's Room (12th & Pine) are preparing a booklist of black and third world materials currently available for mid-January publication.)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY ON BLACK WOMEN

1. The Black Woman  
edited by Toni Cade Bambara.
2. Tomorrow's Tomorrow: The Black Woman  
by Joyce Ladner
3. Beautiful Also Are the Souls of My Black Sisters  
by Jeanne Noble
4. Together Black Women  
by Inez Smith Reid
5. American Black Women in the Arts and Social Sciences (bibliography)  
edited by Ora Williams
6. Images of Afro-American Women (bibliography)  
edited by L.M. Collins
7. Black Women's Studies  
(Forthcoming from the Feminist Press)  
edited by B. Smith and C. Hull
8. Black-Eyed Susans and Midnight Birds  
by Mary Helen Washington
9. Keeping The Faith (anthology of black women's poetry)  
edited by Pat Crutchfield

16 pig + f Bulletin, 1980  
vol 2, no 8

8. EXPANDING HORIZONS: A NEWSLETTER FOR YOUNG BLACK WOMEN.  
1988. Oakland, CA. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide encouragement to young Black women to take more mathematics courses and to consider careers that are math-related. Includes interviews

2. BLACK WOMEN'S VOICE. Newsletter of the National Council of Negro Women, Inc. Last issue published in 1985. Last issue published in 1988. Replaced by SISTERS MAGAZINE in 1988.





# Committee for the Visibility of the Other Black Woman:

The Black Lesbian

PRESENTS A BENEFIT FOR

BECOMING VISIBLE

THE BLACK LESBIAN CONFERENCE  
OCTOBER 1980

## Conflicts In The Black Lesbian Community

CROSSCULTURAL CONFLICTS: Afro American Lesbian and the Afro  
Caribbean Lesbian Woman.

CLASSISM: The College Degreed Lesbian and the non-Degreed or Self Taught  
Lesbian.

AGEISM: Older Lesbians and Younger Lovers.

IDENTITIES: Bulldaggers, Dykes, Lesbians, Femmes, Sooners, and Women  
Identified Women.

May 31

7:00PM

First Unitarian Church

DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN

50 Monroe Place, on corner of Pierrepont Street

→ 2 3 4 5 Trains to Boro Hall or A Train to High Street

DONATION \$ 5.00

WOMEN ONLY

FOR INFO CONTACT:

L. PINSON (212) 982 - 6280  
J. GRAY (212) 860 - 4936  
G. BROOKS (201) 795 - 1794

C/O BROOKS, P.O. BOX M564, HOBOKEN, N.J. 07030  
L. PINSON 212 982-6280, J. GRAY 212 860-4936, G. BROOKS 201 795-1794

7. CONNECTIONS. 1982. Milwaukee, WI. Publication of the  
Black Women's Network, founded in 1979, to create  
a support system for Black women, to strengthen  
personal and business relations, to create  
work with other organizations among Black women,  
to Black women, to monitor legislation on issues of importance  
awareness of the Black community, and to increase.

3. BLACK WOMEN IN THE MIDDLE WEST: THE PAST OF THE FUTURE  
A DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE PROJECT PROGRESS REPORTS.  
1984-1985. Progress reports of the Black Women  
in the Middle West project of Purdue University  
launched by Professor Darlene Clark Hine. The  
effort resulted in a book entitled, When the Truth  
is Told: A History of Black Women's Culture and  
Community in Indiana 1875-1950, which is available  
for \$5 from: Indiana Historical Bureau, 140 N.  
Senate Ave., Room 408, Indianapolis, IN 46204.

# 1980 and beyond...



# Black Lesbian Study Group

FOR WOMEN OF COLOR

At the Lesbian Herstory Archives

Starting WEDNESDAY, January 7, 1981 at 6:30 P.M.

Facilitated by BROOKS

What Next?

There will be discussions, guest speakers and discussions of books

Topics will include: the necessity of a Black Lesbian Study Group & Self-love, feminism & sisterhood, publishing, health, Black Lesbian Herstory, theatre, writing, music and more.

NO FEE

For more information call: 874-7232 or (201) 795-1794 (o.k. to call late).

## SOME SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR BLACK LESBIAN RESEARCH

*As Black women, as Lesbians and feminists there is no guarantee that our lives will ever be looked at with the kind of respect given to certain people from other races, sexes or classes. There is surely no guarantee that we or our movement will survive long enough to become safely historical, we must document ourselves now.*

—Barbara Smith and Beverly Smith  
Combustion (1979)

- create written and oral histories of Black lesbian groups
- preserve the records and papers of Black lesbian groups
- create Black and Third World lesbian libraries and archives; add to the already existing lesbian, gay and women's archives collections
- methodical searches of Black women's papers in Black archives and manuscript collections for relevant lesbian documents in the form of letters, diaries, and unpublished writings
- create oral histories of older Black lesbians
- research Black gay women's clubs and mini-societies existing in large U.S. cities
- write your life story
- write and preserve individual personal papers, letters, diaries, journals, unpublished writings
- document Black lesbian life with photographs and drawings
- collect articles and news clippings by and about Black lesbians from the Black, gay, lesbian, and feminist press
- research the lives and works of Black lesbian writers, activists, musicians
- research earlier Black lesbian/gay subcultures, i.e., in Harlem and Detroit ca. 1920s-30s
- collect Black lesbian poetry, both published and unpublished
- keep biographical files on individual Black lesbian musicians, poets, artists, activists, writers, etc.
- research the roles and contributions of Black lesbians to various social change movements: civil rights, Black power movement, lesbian and gay liberation, Black feminist movement, white women's movement, Black Africa causes, anti-war and peace movements, Black gay liberation, Third World lesbian and gay liberation, the 1950s-60s homophobic movement and possibly such earlier movements as the anti-lynching movement

- collect and publish Black blues lyrics containing lesbian images or content
- search out materials on Black lesbianism in Africa
- search through Black slave narratives and records for lesbian-related information
- research the lives of Black women who may have been woman-identified: Harriet Tubman, Angelina Weld Grimké, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Mary Fields, Besse Smith, Gladys Ferguson, Edmonia Lewis, Lorraine Hansberry
- investigate, study, and write about Black lesbian and white lesbian relationships and bonding
- write your experiences in poetry and fiction
- trace the appearance and treatment of lesbianism in the Black press and in specific periodicals such as *Jer*

Faye JR Roberts' Black Lesbians  
(Vaid Press, 1981)

Also...

- prepare bibliographies
- hold study groups at the archives
- adopt a subject file
- become a liaison for your group with the archives

Put a weapon  
to your pussy!

WHAT NEXT?



# V. Donor Forms

Lesbian Herstory Archives/Lesbian Herstory Educational Foundation, Inc.  
**SPECIAL COLLECTION DONOR AGREEMENT**  
(for art/photography and visual/audio oral history use separate forms)

uh oh!

Paper  
← WORK

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Donor: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Collection (if different from Donor's Name): \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Collection # \_\_\_\_\_  
(to be filled in by LHEF)

I agree to donate the material described below to the Lesbian Herstory Archives/Lesbian Herstory Educational Foundation (LHEF, Inc.) to become its permanent property. All property rights of the material or objects donated are granted to LHEF. This material may be made available for browsing and research, subject to restrictions that may appear below.

Description of material. Identify the creator(s) of each item where relevant; indicate if unknown (use additional pages if necessary).



... periodicals, for example) are to be  
... video, film, or other  
... upon

## DONATING MATERIAL TO THE ARCHIVES

As you may know, with very minor exceptions materials in our collections have been donated by members of our communities. This has enabled us to create an archive with an incomparable range of material representing diverse lesbian lives and cultures. We are truly pleased you are considering donating material to the Archives and adding to the depth and breadth of its collections.

- There are two ways you can support the Archives with the donation of material:
- 1) You can donate material for placement in our regular collections—books, videos, CDs, DVDs, t-shirts, magazines, journals, graphics, etc
  - 2) You can donate your personal or organizational papers and memorabilia and we will create a Special Collection for you.

Each of these requires some preparation, if possible, which will make our work much easier. In the case of your own personal collection, it will also help to ensure that your life or organization is represented in the way you see it rather than with a structure we impose.

## DONATING MATERIAL FOR PLACEMENT IN OUR REGULAR COLLECTIONS

Like many of the lesbians we know, various keepsakes representing lesbian life and experience may be filling up shelves, file cabinets, boxes, drawers, closets, the garage or basement in your home. At some point you may decide it's time to make room for more. Rather than putting that material out in the street, please realize that it will be invaluable to generations of lesbians who will come after you.

If you have read our tour of the archives and the description of our collections, you know we preserve all types of materials. Whether it is a zine that was only published once, a mainstream TV program you taped, or an entire collection of mystery books by lesbian authors, we would like you to consider donating it to the Archives. However, in order to keep our work to a minimum, we ask you to follow a simple procedure

Like most Archives, we have limited space. For our books and older (or rare) periodicals we keep one exact copy in the Archives and store one exact duplicate (or set) off site. Unless they are rare or one-of-a-kind, we only keep one copy of t-shirts, videos, CDs, LPs, etc. So, if you have decided to give us any of these types of materials we ask that you contact us first and send us a list of the material you have. You can fax it (718-768-4553) or mail it (PO Box 1258, NY, NY 10116). Give us the titles, author and dates of books, the title, year, volume and numbers of the periodical issues, the descriptions of the words and graphics on T-shirts (unless they are on-of-a-kind), and identifying information about CDs, DVDs, videos, etc. When we have this information we can check it against our database. Then we'll get back to you telling you which material does not duplicate something we already have and you can send it to us. We appreciate that this takes some time but we ask that you please do this rather than simply mailing the material to us.

When you donate material for placement in our regular collections you do not have to fill out donor forms. However, if the material is meaningful to you in a specific way - for example, a T-shirt reminds you of a particular event or person - it would be great if you could describe that in a letter that accompanies the material. We include this type of information in our databases.

I think,  
I have questions ...

I Agree!



## CREATING AND DONATING YOUR SPECIAL COLLECTION

oted earlier, our Special Collections are made up of the personal papers of individual lesbians - GBT organizations with known lesbian participation. In the case of organizations, a Special Collection is y created after an organization no longer exists and sends us its papers. One can also be created when an idual who helped found an organization or worked in it for a long time sends us papers about that organization asks that it be kept as a Special Collection rather than simply being integrated into our Organization Files.

While we have Special Collections from many "well-known" lesbians and from large organizations, we also have many collections from lesbians you have probably never heard of, lesbians who - like most of us - live their lives in relative anonymity and belong to or have created local, small organizations. We especially value the latter because our goal is to have Special Collections from as wide and diverse a group of lesbians and communities as possible. In that way our history will more accurately reflect the range of lives we have led rather than reducing us to a stereotype or to a few "famous" women.

## CREATING YOUR SPECIAL COLLECTION

We urge you to start creating your Special Collection today. Save your letters, emails, birthday cards, photographs of friends, lovers, and family, your unpublished poetry or prose, work related papers, papers indicating your participation in organizations you have belonged to, and so on. You might want to make a video, an audiotape or a CD about your life or community. If the Special Collection you are creating is from an organization you belonged to, it can include all types of organizational papers including minutes, leaflets, photos, and newspaper articles about it or articles of incorporation if relevant.

Here are some pointers for the physical well being of your collection:

- Store your papers and keepsakes in a dry, dark place. Dampness, heat, and overexposure to dust to decay. Keep moldy documents away from light.
- Remove metal staples - they rust. Use paper clips on most clear and masking tapes is recommended for precious documents before it is too late.
- Unfold all papers so they lie flat. Plastic paper clips when possible very acidic, and causes paper to yellow.
- Don't keep photographs in plastic bags. Mylar or other acid-free material is best. Label the back of photos with name, location, and names of people.

And, here are some pointers for the physical well being of your collection:

- If possible, include a list of items. Be as lengthy as possible.
- Identify the papers in a way that is understandable to you.

- 1. dry, dark place. Dampness, heat, and overexposure to dust to decay. Keep moldy documents away from light.
- 2. Remove metal staples - they rust. Use paper clips on most clear and masking tapes is recommended for precious documents before it is too late.

In this section we discuss some of the issues you should think about and some of the specific instructions you are asked to provide on these forms:

### Property Rights:

When you agree to give your material to the Archives, you are giving the Archives the property rights for all of the materials and objects (Property Rights are different from copyrights; See below). The Archives does not accept material on loan or for temporary storage. When you sign the Donor Form you are agreeing that the material you send to us becomes the permanent property of the Archives. However, you can specify how and under what conditions the material can be used.

### Duplicate Material:

Your collection may contain magazines, books, and flyers that already exist in the Archives. While we will note that they were part of your personal collection so that individuals doing research will be aware of them as part of your life, we must restrict the amount of duplicate material we house in the building. Therefore we may decide to eliminate the actual physical material from your collection. Please indicate if duplicate material should be returned to you or if LHEF may decide what to do with it.

### Copyright:

Copyright is the exclusive right to reproduce, prepare derivative works, distribute copies, publicly perform, or display unpublished or published works. This includes the right to publish significant portions of published or unpublished works. Copyright belongs to the creator or creators of a work (no matter who possesses physical ownership of the work) unless another agreement about copyright has been made, or the work is a "work-for-hire" (something prepared by an employee within the scope of employment, or something expressly stated as a work-for-hire in a signed document). Upon your death, copyright of an unpublished work created on or after January 1, 1978 is automatically transferred for a period of 50 years to the managers of your estate (often the traditional "next of kin") unless you have specified otherwise. 50 years after your death, unless another arrangement is made, copyright passes from your heirs into the public domain. Unpublished works created before January 1, 1978 are covered for the same length of time, but copyright protection will not expire before the end of 2002. Copyright protection for published works is more complicated; check with the publishing company, a lawyer, or an archivist for more information.

We encourage you to make explicitly clear who is to possess copyright of your unpublished material here at the Archives both before and after your death, in order to prevent possible disputes. On the Donor Form, please indicate if you want to:

- assign copyright at this time to LHEF
- retain copyright during your lifetime assigning copyright of your material to the Lesbian Herstory Educational Foundation upon your death
- make another arrangement, perhaps assigning copyright to another trusted individual upon your death. If you wish to specify another arrangement, please indicate this on the Donor Agreement form. In order to prevent misunderstandings, be sure to create a will and reinforce the terms of this agreement there. Wills are often not enough to prevent destruction of the history of a stigmatized people. Even when everything is in proper legal order, heirs have been known to destroy or censor letters, photographs, and diaries. It is safest to secure the records of your life, before your death, in the place where you want them to be.

When you retain the copyright to your archival collection, researchers and publishers bear the responsibility to

"SPECIAL" Collection?

VI. What's Paper Work?

What about Copyright?



Must care much!

# Stuff I'm Gonna Donate to the Archives...

... MY SPECIAL COLLECTION LIST... BEGINS HERE ↓

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
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13. \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_

... AND MORE!

STUFF I'm Gonna Donate



**Olive Demetrius**, Director and Producer, is Co-Director of U-People. She has worked for the Lucy Awards program that recognizes outstanding achievements in photography. Her work includes conducting interviews of outstanding individuals such as Jerry Schatzberg, Susan Calhoun-Moss, Charlie Moss, Barney Melsky all to honor advertising legend Howard Zeiff. As a part of a program which National Black Programming Consortium and LOGO MTV Networks have teamed up to provide, Olive Demetrius has been provided the opportunity to assist the production and creative departments at LOGO. There she has served as camera operator for the New Now Next shoot featuring Annie Lenox, The Big Gay Sketch Show and a Cadillac promo. Olive Demetrius' work in documentary includes shooting on location in Caracas, Venezuela during the filming of Bringing Venezuela Back. This piece focused on the World Festival of Youth and Students. Her work has been screened throughout New York City at Brecht Forum, The Cantor Film Center, and MNN.

## VII. The Players

**Arianne Benford** is an interdisciplinary artist whose work is grounded in the word. Through the spoken and written word, text based installations and paintings, photography, prints, the book as art, or any medium that suits her current projects; she seeks to create an ongoing discourse between the public and the private, the forgotten and the canonized, sensual and the everyday. On the stage and in the street in galleries and public spaces Arianne invokes and questions our memories, assumptions of ourselves and that which we hold dear. She is a proud native of Chicago IL. Recently she has been featured in overexposed/underdeveloped at NYSP Gallery NYC, appeared as a featured artist in the Fresh Fruit Festival in New York, as well as at Second City in WordsFest, and Columbia College's Manifest to name a few.

### Tanika Harbor

Website: [www.tanikaharbor.com](http://www.tanikaharbor.com)

Part Actress/Part Goddess/Healer/Poet/Activist, this visionary artist studied Theater and Africana Studies in undergrad, where her work, both as performer/writer were infused with "Art as Activism for Social Change and Empowerment." She went on to pursue her Master of Fine Arts in Acting. Her work is now layered with themes/issues related to Race, Gender, Womanist thought, LGBT issues, & the Spiritual duality of Black Womyn's Sexuality. After a long sabbatical, she is happy to be returning home to Art and currently working on her one-woman show, entitled, "Make Me Wanna Holla'/Re-writing an Obituary" and a piece entitled, "They told me Heaven wasn't for Homos"

**KAZ...**Comedian/Dancer and Community Activist, New York KAZ delivers her positive messages through art, as she is also serves as the Director of Circle of Voices Inc. She will be the opening act for DC- Black Pride's Sophisticated Ladies Productions Host party Memorial Day Weekend 2010. Kaz performed her comedy routine "Let's Talk 40 & more..." at "Women's Week 2009 in Provincetown, MA, and designed the set for "The Family" (written & produced by Ms. Mistah Productions) a play about a Non-Conventional family at The Producers Club, New York, December 2009. She has served on the Board of Directors for Black Pride NYC, Brooklyn Pride, Brooklyn Community Pride Center and was requested to serve as Co-Chair of Economic Development for the former Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Field's LGBT Advisory Committee. Circle of Voices Inc. is a LGBT- all orientations arts presentational organization.

[www.circleofvoicesinc.org](http://www.circleofvoicesinc.org) or [www.facebook/circleofvoicesinc.com](http://www.facebook/circleofvoicesinc.com)

Bookings: [www.facebook/nykaz.com](http://www.facebook/nykaz.com)

on 10/10/10



# VIII. The Archives & CLAGS & Thank youssss.

**LESBIAN**

**HERSTORY**

**ARCHIVES**

## A Brief History

In 1972, a group of women and men including Joan Nestle, mostly gay, who worked or had been educated in the City University of New York and had participated in the liberation movements of the 1960s, founded the Gay Academic Union (GAU). Dedicated to representing the concerns of lesbian and gay students, teachers, and workers, GAU also launched projects to ensure gay inclusion in course content. At the first conference of the organization, a bomb threat emptied the auditorium, but the conference continued.

Later in 1974, a larger group of women started meeting on a regular basis to work out the deeper vision of this undertaking. One of the first tasks the group undertook was to send off a news release to all of the then existing lesbian, feminist and gay publications announcing the groundbreaking undertaking. This was a testing of the waters, to see if the community shared in our vision. The answer was "yes", and in the next year, 1975, LHA published its first free newsletter.

As was common in the early 1970s, after a year of working together, several of the women decided they needed a separate meeting space to discuss sexism in the organization, among other things. Two consciousness-raising groups were formed and one of them, which included Joan Nestle and Deborah Edel, became the founding site of the Lesbian Herstory Archives. At one meeting in 1974, Julia Stanley and Joan Nestle, who had come out before the Gay Liberation Movement, talked about the precariousness of lesbian culture and how so much of our past culture was seen only through patriarchal eyes. Deborah Edel, Sahli Cavallo and Pamela Oline, with histories ranging from lesbian-feminism to political lesbianism, joined in and, thus, a new concept was born - a grassroots Lesbian archives.

## In Amerika they Call Us Dykes: Lesbian Lives in the 1970s

Spring Series & Fall Festival

In recognition of this momentous decade, the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies (CLAGS) will be holding a weekend long event/conference/ festival of lesbian history, culture, arts, scholarship, discussion, and performance from Friday, October 8 to Sunday, October 10th. The event will call upon experience, memory, and scholarship to represent as fully as possible the broad and wide experience of lesbians during the 1970s.

CLAGS Lesbians in the 70s Series will:

- Introduce and educate a broader audience about a crucial aspect of post-war American history.
- Commemorate and illuminate the contributions of lesbians in the 1970s whose work was instrumental in the development of a modern feminist and LGBT identity.
- Nurture current historical research on women and Lesbianism during this particular era.
- Engage current multidisciplinary scholars of the 1970s, lesbianism, and feminism.
- Create an original anthology of older work and new scholarly and creative work on lesbian lives in the 1970s and now.

**CLAGS**

Find out more  
- [www.lhef.org](http://www.lhef.org) -  
- [www.clags.org](http://www.clags.org) -

*Info on Lesbian  
Herstory Archives*



That's me! →



Thank you!  
 ♡. Shelley for being my right hand!  
 \*Desiree for the work no coffee nudge!  
 Joan: for your constant availability + support over seas.  
 ! Maxine for the snuggles + flowers!

- Deb for the support + selfless  
 - Teddy for Conventions Eve  
 - Paula for reaching + texting  
 - Ari for being so willing.

### CALL ME SHAWN!

Shawn(ta) Smith is an Archivist, and Young Adult Reference Librarian at the Brooklyn Public Library at the Grand Army Plaza Central Branch, is a Coordinator at the Lesbian Herstory Archives, and is WebAdministrator at the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies (CLAGS) at the CUNY Graduate Center.

Smith finds equilibrium as a producer and collective member of Rivers of Honey, a women and trans-of-color monthly Cabaret at WOW Cafe Theater. Smith is also a blogger and creative writer, currently working on commissions about Librarianship, Archiving, and Lesbian Young Adult Fiction.

Before obtaining her Bachelor's degree, Smith was co-founder and Director of award-winning organization, Sister Outsider, (2000-2005), named for Audre Lorde's book of essays and poem, a collective organization that employed self-supporting young women to develop social justice projects and earn living wages in East Flatbush Brooklyn.; was a founding member of FIERCE, a lesbian, bisexual, gay, and transsexual youth activist organization in NYC; and was founding member of YA-YA Network, a network for NYC-based youth organizations.

- Jee for saying, "That's dope, what time!"

lesbian!

Sarah Chavis for taking the fall for my + everything.  
 - Olive for being the first to answer the AD.  
 - Kiz for your persistence  
 Thank you  
 Tanika for being amazing + shy!

Thank you  
 Women for being so sexy + black x lesbian.

To schedule a consultation on how to create your very own special collection, contact me:  
 shawntasmith@gmail.com

We'll have tea/coffee... it'll be fun!

xx Shawn ♡.

thank you canonized. ancestors.